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EDUCATION AS AN IDEAL MEANS OF ACHIEVING A NATION STATE IN UKRAINE

István Csernicskó — Viktória Ferenc

Education policy forms the structure, the type and the density of a state's educational institution network, determines the content of teaching and the ideologies which the institutions mediate. Education policy never ends in itself: it always functions with social, economic, ideological and political purposes. In its background we can often find aims of national and language policy as well. In this paper we provide an example of such a case by showing linguistic aspects of the Ukrainian education policy.

In accordance with the Constitution and the Law on Languages Ukraine is (*de jure*) a monolingual state (see Beregszászi–Csernicskó 2003, 2004, 2007). However, Ukraine *de facto* is multilingual. Almost all of Ukrainian researchers acknowledge this multilingualism, but regard it as a problem (see e.g. Lozinskyi 2006: 217). The Ukrainian political power does the same, when endeavours to weaken the linguistic diversity in order to achieve harmony between the *de facto* and *de jure* situations.

According to the 2001 national census the population of Ukraine can be divided into the following groups on the basis of people's native language

- a) People who *speak Ukrainian as their native language*, including:
 - Ukrainians (by nationality) whose native language is Ukrainian (85% of those who claimed to be Ukrainian);
 - Russians whose native language is Ukrainian (4% of those who claimed to be Russian)
 - National minorities whose native language is Ukrainian (e.g. 71% of the Poles, 42% of the Slovaks who live in Ukraine);
- b) People who *speak Russian as their native language*, including:
 - Russians whose native language is Russian (96% of those who claimed to be Russian);
 - Ukrainians whose native language is Russian (15% of Ukrainians);
 - National minorities whose native language is Russian (e.g. 62% of the Byelorussians);
- c) *National minorities whose nationality and native language are the same* (e.g. 95% of the Hungarians, 92% of the Romanians);

d) *National minorities who speak the native language of another minority group* (e.g. in Transcarpathia 62% of the Roma consider Hungarian to be their native language (see Molnar, 2004: 120–121), this group constitutes 18% of all Roma in Ukraine).

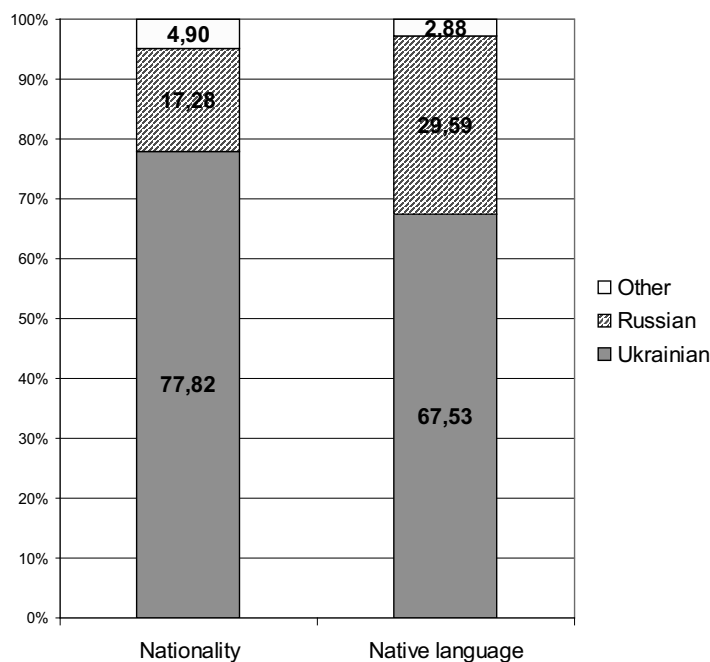
TABLE 1. THE population of Ukraine according to native language and nationality (based on the data from the 2001 national census)

NATIONALITY AND NATIVE LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	%
Ukrainians (by nationality) whose native language is Ukrainian	31 970 728	66.27
Russians whose native language is Ukrainian	328 152	0.68
National minorities whose native language is Ukrainian	278 588	0.58
TOTAL NUMBER OF THOSE WHOSE NATIVE LANGUAGE IS UKRAINIAN	32 577 468	67.53
Russians whose native language is Russian	7 993 832	16.57
Ukrainians whose native language is Russian	5 544 729	11.49
National minorities whose native language is Russian	735 109	1.52
TOTAL NUMBER OF THOSE WHOSE NATIVE LANGUAGE IS RUSSIAN	14 273 670	29.59
National minorities whose nationality and native language are the same	1 129 397	2.34
National minorities who speak the native language of another minority group as their native language	260 367	0.54
TOTAL NUMBER OF THOSE WHO SPEAK MINORITY LANGUAGES	1 389 764	2.88
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPEAKERS IN UKRAINE	48 240 902	100

If we take into consideration native language and nationality census data (Fig. 1.) the following statements can be made:

- The percentage of people whose nationality is Ukrainian is higher than the percentage of people who speak Ukrainian.
- The percentage of people who speak Russian is higher than the percentage of people who consider themselves to be ethnically Russian.
- Ethnic diversity is greater in Ukraine than linguistic diversity because a number of minority groups have begun to speak Russian or (less frequently) Ukrainian.

Figure 1. The population of Ukraine according to native language and nationality (2001 national census data)



If we concentrate on one more aspect besides nationality and native language, the linguistic picture of Ukraine becomes more complicated. This aspect is the percentage of pupils studying in different languages in the country. In the 2003/2004 academic year 75.05% of the Ukrainian pupils studied in schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction, 23.89% in schools with Russian as the language of instruction, and no more than 1.06% studied in schools where the language of instruction was other than Ukrainian or Russian.

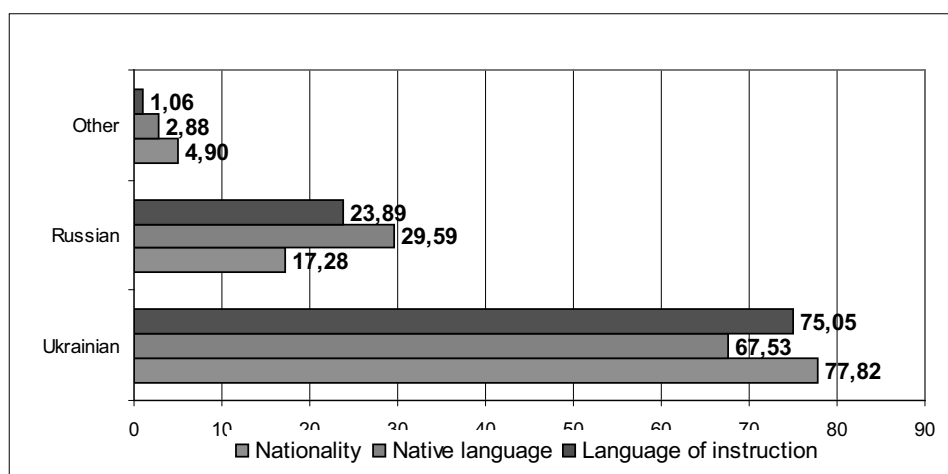
This means that:

- More pupils study in schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction than the number of people who speak Ukrainian as their native language, but fewer than the number of people who consider themselves Ukrainian by nationality;
- Fewer pupils study in schools with Russian as the language of instruction than the percentage of those whose native language is Russian in the country, but considerably more than the percentage of people with Russian nationality;
- Even though the percentage of those who are not Ukrainian/Russian is about five percent and the percentage of those who speak minority languages as their native language is about three percent, only one child in a hundred

can learn in a school where the medium of instruction is not Ukrainian or Russian (see Fig. 1.).

Figure 2. The coincidence of nationality, native language and the language of instruction in the population of Ukraine, based on the 2001 census data

The Ukrainian state language policy would like to solve the discrepancy between the *de jure* and the *de facto* situation by harmonising the language situation of the country with the codified legal situation. Namely, the unspoken aim is to turn Ukraine into a practically monolingual, a *de facto* Ukrainian-speaking state. Education is seen as an ideal means to achieve these aims. The examples below, in our opinion, prove that educational policy is used as a means to achieve the goals



of nation and language policy.

1. In the final statement of a council meeting in the Ministry of Education and Science where the low level of teaching the official language in nationality schools was the key issue of the discussion, the increasing number of schools with Ukrainian as the medium of instruction was emphasized as a positive linguistic phenomenon.¹ There was no mention of strengthening minority languages as the languages of instruction or teaching them as subjects in schools. The state programme² responsible for improving the level of teaching the Ukrainian language also con-

¹ For the confirmation approved by the council meeting see the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. (http://www.mon.gov.ua/newstmp/2008/20_03/doc.doc).

² The document entitled *State programme for improving teaching the Ukrainian language in schools where the medium of instruction is a nationality language for the years of 2008-2011*. is available in Ukrainian on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

siders positively the rising number of schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

2. According to paragraph (8) of the statute N 244/2008 published by the President of Ukraine on March 20, 2008 about the improvement of the quality of education in Ukraine, minorities' educational demands should be satisfied in such a way that some subjects should be taught in Ukrainian in the minority schools. The situation of minority language education is not discussed in this document either.

3. Statute N 461 published by the Minister of Education, Ivan Vakarchuk on May 26, 2008 put into force a departmental programme (for the years between 2008 and 2011)³ for nationality schools in order to improve the teaching of Ukrainian language. According to the action plan, from September 1, 2008 in the 5th grade of nationality schools the subject History of Ukraine should be taught bilingually: in the native language and in the state language (at the expense of the optional lessons). In the 6th grade the subject should be taught only in Ukrainian (from September 1, 2009). In the 6th grade geography and in the 7th grade mathematics should be taught bilingually, and then in the next grades they should only be taught in the state language.

Nevertheless, according to the draft methodological guide for the implementation of the transitive educational model, lessons should not be organised on the basis of the above mentioned statute. The methodological guide prescribes the usage of both languages during the same lesson: the teacher should first explain the material in one language and then do the same in the other. Code switching should always be marked. Before switching from one language to the other the teacher should say: "and now I will explain it in Ukrainian (or Hungarian, Russian, Crimean Tatar, etc)" or "In Ukrainian this sounds like ...".

4. According to the Government's statute N1033 published in September 30, 2009⁴ in schools during working time only Ukrainian can be used. In case of minority language medium schools *besides* Ukrainian the language of instruction can be used too. It means that the Government endeavours not only to shift the language of instruction to Ukrainian but also to make peoples use the state language during the breaks.

5. While the Ministry of Education quoted the very low level and low efficiency of the official language teaching in nationality language schools as the most important educational problem⁵, taking school leaving and entrance examinations

3 For the document see the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine: <http://www.mon.gov.ua>

4 Постанова Кабінету Міністрів України Про внесення змін до Положення про загальноосвітній навчальний заклад № 1033 від 30 вересня 2009 р.

5 The Minister of Education stated the following in his speech held on March 4, 2008: "It has turned out that instead of teaching the Ukrainian language, very often they just imitate doing it, nevertheless

in Ukrainian language and literature was made obligatory (statute N1171, dated December 25, 2007)⁶. Examination in Ukrainian language and literature is obligatory for all the applicants of higher education establishments, independently of what the person would like to be, a Ukrainian philologist, a historian, a chemist or a doctor.

The requirements of the examinations were absolutely the same for pupils from schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction and pupils from nationality schools.⁷ As a consequence of this in the year of introduction (2008) 8.38% of school-leavers⁸ failed the Ukrainian examination (country average), while among pupils from schools with Hungarian as a medium of instruction the ratio was 29.58%.⁹ In the academic year 2009/2010 9% of the applicants failed the exam in Ukrainian language and literature, nevertheless in Transcarpathian context the ration was 15%. As far as Transcarpathian Hungarians are concerned 28% of Hungarian school-leavers (535 pupils) planed to continue their studies in tertiary education, so all of them applied for the obligatory exam in Ukrainian language, but unfortunately 49% of them failed it.¹⁰

Beginning with the 2009/2010 academic year, all the school leaving (and at the same time entrance) examinations should be taken in Ukrainian in the country.¹¹ The ministerial decree N33 published on January 24, 2008¹² put into force the order of the

the best marks were put in the certificates.” http://www.mon.gov.ua/newstmp/2008/05_03/doc.doc

6 *Наказ Міністерства освіти і науки України Про зовнішнє незалежне оцінювання навчальних досягнень випускників навчальних закладів системи загальної середньої освіти, які виявили бажання вступати до вищих навчальних закладів у 2008 році № 1171 від 25.12.2007 р.*

7 I. Likarchuk, the leader of the centre for independent assessment in his letter (written in Ukrainian) N01/10-661 dated July 17, 2008 to the president of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Organization proclaimed that the state requirements in the subject Ukrainian language and literature are the same for pupils of Ukrainian or Hungarian schools.

8 See: <http://www.testportal.gov.ua>

9 See in the newspaper *Kárpátalja* (June 6, 2008)

10 See in the newspaper *Kárpátalja* (July 24, 2009)

11 According to the declaration written in the website of The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine: "In the transmission period (years of 2008, 2009) the content of tests (with the exception of the test in Ukrainian language and literature) will be translated to some of the minority languages. (http://www.mon.gov.ua/main.php?query=newstmp/2008/20_03/). Added by the authors: In the letter of the ministry N2/2-14-2717 dated August 8, 2008 sent to the Regional Committee of Beregovo it is also written that according to the decision of the government questions of school-leaving and at the same time entrance examinations will be translated to minority languages only in the 2008/2009 academic year.

12 *Наказ Міністерства освіти і науки України Про затвердження Порядку проведення зовнішнього незалежного оцінювання навчальних досягнень випускників навчальних закладів системи загальної середньої освіти № 33 від 24.01.2008 р.*

arrangement of school-leaving/entrance examinations.¹³ According to point 7.2 of the document, examination tests are prepared in Ukrainian language in all the subjects; for pupils of nationality schools the examination material will be translated in the transition period (in 2008 and in 2009) with the exception of the test in Ukrainian language and literature.¹⁴ From the year 2010 translation will not be allowed.

6. The Minister of Education in his speech at the meeting of the leaders of higher educational institutions held on March 21, 2008 said (my translation): "One of the most important tasks of the Ministry of Education and Science is the wholesale introduction of state language education in the higher educational institutions."¹⁵ The Ministry of Education required the higher educational institutions, both state and private, to provide statistics until April 30 about the number of courses which are taught in the institution according to degree programmes, and within this, how many are taught in Ukrainian and how many are taught in an other language. If there are courses that are not taught in the official language, reasons should be provided. The Ministry asked for similar statistics concerning full-time teachers, i.e. the number of instructors who do not teach their courses in Ukrainian.¹⁶ In accord with the above mentioned facts it is stated in the draft of the Law on Higher Education (worked out in spring 2008) that in Ukraine the language of higher education is Ukrainian.

7. On December 25, 2008 the Minister of Education wrote an official letter (N19/9-480) to all higher education establishments in the country. In this letter he established that the language of instruction partially or totally is not Ukrainian in several institutions of the country. Referring to the Bologna Declaration and the European Higher Education Area, moreover, to the integration and mobility of the Ukrainian students he advised to the universities to make steps in order to foster that higher education in Ukraine became more and more Ukrainian. On the one hand it is necessary because of the status of the Ukrainian language as an official language, on the other hand it is needed in order to promote raising the role of the Ukrainian language in modern science and in higher education. He proposes concrete steps as well. For example one of the Minister's advices is that those teachers

13 Порядок проведення зовнішнього незалежного оцінювання навчальних досягнень випускників навчальних закладів системи загальної середньої освіти.

14 The same is repeated in the description of the order of school-leaving and entrance examinations in the year of 2009 (point 7.2.), which was affirmed by the ministerial decree N133 on March 13, 2009: *Наказ Міністерства освіти і науки України Про затвердження нормативно-правових актів щодо проведення зовнішнього незалежного оцінювання навчальних досягнень випускників навчальних закладів системи загальної середньої освіти в 2009 році № 133 від 18.03.2009 р.*

15 The speech can be found in Ukrainian at: http://www.mon.gov.ua/main.php?query=newstmp/2008/21_03

16 See letters №1/9-189. and 1/9-201 (written on 2 April, 2008) of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on the following website: <http://www.mon.gov.ua>

who do not teach in Ukrainian (but mainly in Russian) hitherto should work as a guest teacher for a shorter or longer period at universities where the language of instruction is Ukrainian. In exchange the home university should receive guest lecturers who teach their subjects in Ukrainian. The leader of the Ministry suggests the exchange and rotation of the students as well. According to this, students of universities where the medium of instruction is not Ukrainian should be sent to trainings (lasting for several months or a semester) at universities where subjects are taught in Ukrainian. The author of the letter stimulates teachers to gradually start working out their notes and books in Ukrainian, moreover, in the second semester beginning in February 2009 they could try to teach some of the subjects in Ukrainian.

8. In his evaluation speech held on April 2, 2009 in Kyiv the Ukrainian Minister of Education interpreted surprisingly the challenges of the Ukrainian higher education concerning its joining to the European Higher Education Area. In part VIII. of his speech (which has the title: The situation of the Ukrainian medium education) the minister proclaims that (my translation): "According to the European standards one of the main feature of university graduates' qualification is the level of knowledge of the official language." He is sorry to consider that in the country's higher education establishments at BA/BSc level altogether 86%, at MA/MSc level 88% of the normative subjects are taught in Ukrainian language. Nevertheless he points out the following reasons behind the phenomenon:

- Lack of teachers' terminological knowledge in Ukrainian language;
- Lack or small sample of books, methodological materials published in Ukrainian language;

At the same time he declares that the formation of the common (commonly Ukrainian) education area is exceptionally important. The Minister announced in full conviction that the department under his leadership worked out the route at the end of which, until 2012, Ukrainian will be the medium of instruction at all the universities in the country.

Vakarchuk's point of view considering the characteristics of quality higher education is also very peculiar. He brings the attention of the rectors and of the higher educational department of the Ministry to the following factors, which are necessary to provide quality higher education:

- one of the obligatory prerequisites of signing contracts with teachers working in higher education should be to hold the lessons in Ukrainian language;
- Ukrainian language trainings should be organised for professors, teachers working in higher education establishments;
- teachers should be convinced to teach their lessons in Ukrainian;
- computer programmes and operational systems in Ukrainian should be made widely used;
- in the process of formation the hierarchy of higher education establishments, one of the defining factors taken into consideration should be the ratio of subjects taught in the official language and book-supply in Ukrainian;

- introducing Ukrainian as the obligatory language at the defences of dissertations and degree papers;
- in case of students from abroad lectures should be taught in Ukrainian, too;

In part X. of his speech, the Minister mentions that there are crucial problems concerning the teaching of Ukrainian technical terminology. It is not accidental that the Ministry makes obligatory for all the faculties the teaching of the Ukrainian terminology. Further on, according to the new Law on Higher Education university and college teachers should take part in trainings on Ukrainian technical terminology at least once in every 5 years as part of the obligatory continuing training.

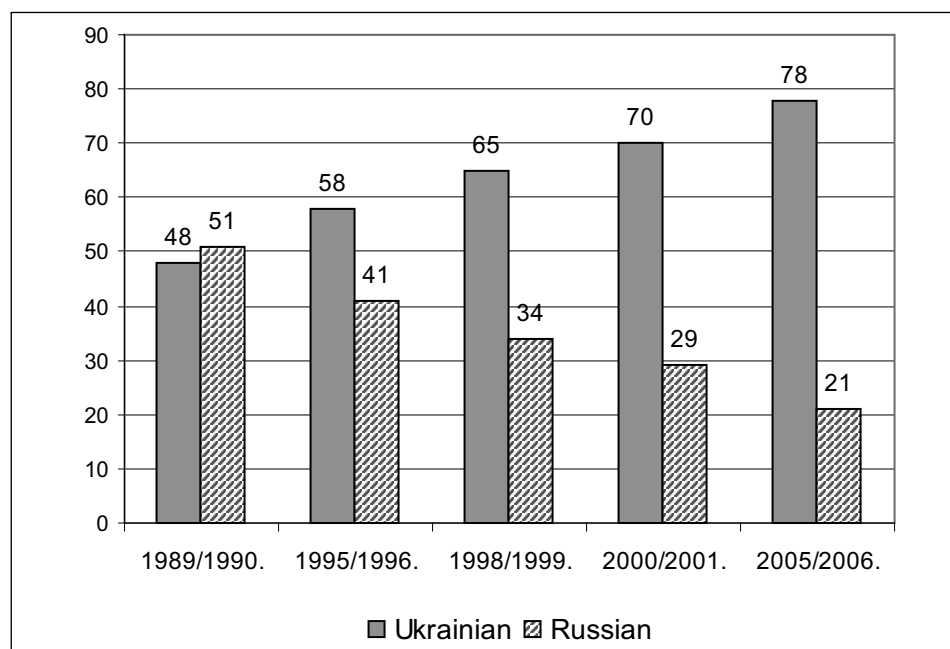
Taking into consideration the previously mentioned things, it is absolutely not surprising that in the 23 page long speech of the minister there is no mention of higher education with minority languages as a medium of instruction. Moreover, we can not be surprised that teaching foreign languages is mentioned in only one paragraph. Nevertheless, in this paragraph we wait for concrete issues in vain. After the Minister composes one of the biggest platitudes, which have been said in terms of foreign languages (knowing foreign languages is one of the important means of gaining information, and takes part in students' and teachers' mobility), he declares that because the task of forming the bases of foreign languages is the responsibility of the secondary school, higher education has only the role to develop them. He points out that at faculties of natural sciences only Ukrainian language, history of Ukrainian culture, one foreign language and philosophy are necessary from the wide range of human subjects.

Not long after the Minister's speech, he issued his decree N 341 on April 17, 2009. According to the decree an action plan was accepted with the aim of improving the education of Ukrainian technical terminology. In accordance with the above mentioned thoughts, with the beginning of the academic year 2009/2010 the subject 'Ukrainian technical terminology' becomes one of the obligatory subjects in all higher education institutions in Ukraine, so teaching of it is also obligatory for all of the faculties (point 2.4.). The subject should end with a state examination (point 1.5.). The subject should be taught for foreign students who are studying in Ukraine, too (point 1.4.).

9. On September 16, 2008 a meeting was organized about the situation of higher education in Kyiv where the President of Ukraine (who – like the previous presidents – likes to (be) call(ed) himself as the guarantee of the constitutional order) made a statement that higher education establishments should serve more effectively the state language policy: universities should be “the agents of the state language policy”. According to him the fact that Ukrainian is the language of instruction in the higher education is the part of obligatory patriotic education (my translation).

The results of the efforts on the Ukrainification of the education can be concluded from data in Figure 3, which show us the gradual increase of the number of pupils who study in Ukrainian medium education.

Figure 3. The change of pupils' ratio (in %) studying in Ukrainian and Russian in Ukraine between 1989 and 2006.



(Based on Shamshur–Izhevskaya 1994, Stepanenko 2003, and Bilaniuk–Melnyk 2008)

Nevertheless, we cannot state that efforts to restrict education in minority languages are new phenomena in Ukraine. A plan was made in 1997 by the Ministry of Education for reorganising the educational system. This plan had several versions (at least four), and recommended the transitional and the so called “policultural” model as well (see Csernicskó 1998: 182–185, Beregszászi–Csernicskó–Orosz 2001: 97–100), yet because of the strong protest, the Ministry did not introduce the plan (see Orosz 2005: 47–49).

Further evidences for steps against minority education are the striking differences between the two ratified versions (1999 and 2003) of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (see the Table 2.) In the first version, which the Constitutional Court suspended in 1999, Ukraine chose the most favourable articles to provide for minority languages used as languages of instruction, while in 2003 version provisions were made only for minority languages to be taught as subjects.

TABLE 2. Points and paragraphs of the ratified laws from the years 1999 and 2003 undertaken by Ukraine from the educational clause of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

	Bill N 1350-XIV, 1999 (If the ratio of the minority is at least 20%)	Bill N 802-IV, 2003
Point 1.		
a) pre-school education	a (i), a (ii), a (iii)	a (iii)
b) primary education	b (i), b (ii), b (iii)	b (iv)
c) secondary education	c (i), c (ii), c (iii)	c (iv)
d) technical and vocational education	d (i), d (ii), d (iii)	–
e) higher education	e (i), e (ii)	e (iii)
f) adult and continuing education courses	f (i), f (ii)	f (iii)
g)	G	g
h)	H	h
i)	I	i
Point 2.	Point 2.	Point 2.

The state programme for improving Ukrainian language in the years 2004 to 2010, which was also adopted by the government, proclaims (my translation): "Ukrainian language has a leading position in the state building process." In this document language appears as an important indicator of national identity.¹⁷ The standpoint of the Constitutional Court (accepted on April 22, 2008) is the following (my translation): "The status of the Ukrainian language as a state language is at the same level as the components of the constitutional order of the state such as the territory, the capital and the symbols of the state."

The ministerial programme for improving the teaching of Ukrainian language in the years 2004 to 2010 attributes the following role to Ukrainian language as the state language (my translation): "The statehood of the language is a universal form of peoples' union in a whole, in a nation. It is an important factor of the nation's self-definition; it is the genetic code of the nation, the certain basis of the country's development and the means of improving the national culture."¹⁸ The function of the Ukrainian language in the state-building process is proved by the Law on the

¹⁷ State programme for improving and widening the functions of Ukrainian language for 2004-2010. Approved by decree N1546 of the Government of Ukraine on October 2, 2003

¹⁸ State departmental programme for improving the teaching of Ukrainian language in schools where the language of instruction is a nationality language for the years 2008-2011.

basis of Ukraine's national security (2003), clause 6 (which lists the national interests with priority), which proclaims that (my translation) "to ensure the development of the Ukrainian language as a state language and to make it function in all the spheres of social life in the whole territory of Ukraine" is a national interest.

The question why education and the medium of education has such an important role in the formation of the Ukrainian national consciousness, and in the process of shaping the desired homogeneous Ukraine can be answered with the help of some statistical data.

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages ratified by Ukraine in 2003 applies to the languages of 13 minority communities (see Beregszászi–Csernicskó 2004, 2007). Table 3 shows the coincidence of language identity, language maintenance and the language of instruction concerning the language of the majority (Ukrainians) and the above-mentioned 13 communities.

TABLE 3. Nationality, native language and the language of instruction data concerning larger national communities in Ukraine

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE WITHIN THE POPULATION OF UKRAINE	NATIVE LANGUAGE AND NATIONALITY ARE THE SAME	THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IS ONE'S NATIVE LANGUAGE	
				Number of people	How many % from all of the pupils
Ukrainian	37541693	77.2	85.16	4379675	75.05
Russian	8334141	17.28	95.92	1394331	23.89
Byelorussians	275763	0.57	19.79	–	–
Moldavians	258619	0.54	70.04	6508	0.11
Crimean Tatars	248193	0.51	92.01	5945	0.10
Bulgarians	204574	0.42	64.15	120	0.00
Hungarians	156566	0.32	95.44	20229	0.35
Romanians	150989	0.31	91.74	27471	0.47
Poles	144130	0.30	12.95	1404	0.02
Jews	103591	0.21	3.10	–	–
Greeks	91548	0.19	6.37	–	–
Germans	33302	0.07	12.18	–	–
Gagauses	31923	0.07	71.49	–	–
Slovaks	6397	0.01	41.16	97	0.00

Table 3 demonstrates that language shift is at an advanced stage in the case of communities which do not have native language schools. In spite of the fact that Byelorussians are the second largest minority (after the Russians) in Ukraine, there are no schools with Byelorussian as the language of instruction and only 19.79% of

them claim that their nationality is the same as their native language. In contrast to the Byelorussians, the Romanians and the Hungarians, for instance, are devoted both to their language and schools. It is, of course, not easy to decide that the high number of people who maintain their own language has coincidence with the fact that they can learn in their own language or they are devoted to their schools because their attitudes towards maintaining the language are strong. However, it could be probable that the two indicators correlate and strengthen each other.

Table 4 shows (based on Ukraine's first report on the application of the Charter dated April 20, 2007¹⁹) the presence in education of those 13 minority languages of Ukraine which fall under the force of the Charter. The data given here corroborate the fact that those communities are significantly present on various levels of education for whom language maintenance is typical, and visa versa, the languages of those communities which are on their way to complete language shift are hardly present in education (in some cases national culture and traditions can be learned or they can learn the language of their own community as an optional subject).

TABLE 4. The language of 13 minority communities of Ukraine on various levels of education

Minority language	Language of pre-school education	National culture, traditions	Optional subject	Taught as subject	Language of instruction (1st-4th forms)	Language of instruction (5th-11th forms)	Language of instruction in technical training	It is taught in higher education
Byelorussian			+					
Bulgarian		+	+	+	+	+		+
Gagaus		+	+	+				
Greek		+	+	+				+
Yiddish		+	+	+				+
Crimean Tatar		+	+	+	+	+		+
Polish	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
Hungarian	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Moldavian	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
German	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Russian	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Romanian		+	+	+	+	+		+
Slovak		+	+	+	+			+

*Taught as a foreign language.

Concerning the above-mentioned data, it is not surprising that the Ukrainian state thinks that citizens could be made Ukrainian monolingual speakers by

19 For the report see the following website: http://www.minjust.gov.ua/files/dopovid_20_04_2007.zip

reducing the number of schools with nationality languages used as medium of instruction and by increasing the number of those pupils who get education in Ukrainian. These efforts aim to reach the Ukrainification of the Russian-dominant eastern and southern parts of the country.

The use of educational policy with the aim of assimilation is strengthened by the Ukrainian nation's own experiences. In the age of the Soviet Union, in the eastern and southern parts of the former USSR (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) there was hardly any school where the language of instruction was Ukrainian. Large numbers of Ukrainian pupils learned in schools where Russian was the language of instruction. This could be one of the reasons why only 40% of the Crimean people with Ukrainian nationality, 41% of the people in the county of Donetsk, and 50% of the people in the county of Luhansk claimed Ukrainian as their native language.²⁰

If the goals of the majority society and of the politicians are in contrast with the long term aims of the minority communities, then, obviously, conflicts will be generated. As we observed previously, Ukraine would like to use education policy as a means to achieve aims of language and national policy, although some of the minorities living in the country feel that if the state attacks the schools where the language of instruction is their mother tongue, then it is, indirectly, an offence against their language. It is still the same case, if the state communicates the introduction of the bilingual education and the gradual change-over to state language medium education in minority schools as an action to improve the successful integration and competitiveness of minority members. In a press release dated September 11, 2008 the Ministry of Education felt necessary to emphasise the following (my translation): "The starting point of the Ministry is that a crucial prerequisite of youngsters' future success and their full-value integration into the Ukrainian society is the mastery of the mother tongue and the official language."²¹

The commitment and the determination of the state power and the leaders of education is shown by a cynical statement made by Ivan Vakarchuk. The minister who determines himself as a democratic politician and adheres to the western integration and was delegated to the government by the same political party (*Nasa Ukraina – Narodna Szamooborona*; Our Ukraine – People's Self-defence) that stands behind the president, Viktor Juschenko, shared his opinion in a newspaper interview according to which for a minority person in order to take part in quality higher education, make a carrier and realize oneself, beside speaking his/her mother tongue obviously the Ukrainian language is needed. Further on, he added (my translation): "For me as a Minister it seems clear: nobody has a right to restrict the citizens' constitutional right to study and get education through the medium

²⁰ See census data on the website <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua>

²¹ For the full version of the cited press release (originally in Ukrainian, here we used our own translation) visit the website of the Ministry: http://www.mon.gov.ua/main.php?query=newstmp/2008/11_09.

of the state language. I agree that every mother could sing a lullaby to her child in her mother tongue, but every citizen of Ukraine, within the representatives of minority communities, should wholly integrate into the Ukrainian society and be successful by high level of knowing the state language.”²²

Practically the same appeared in the Minister’s interview published in the newspaper *Тиждень український* (Ukrainian week) on July 17, 2009²³. Here the Minister refers concretely to articles 10 and 11 of Chapter 1 of the Constitution, which according to him, unambiguously states that every citizen of Ukraine has the right to participate in education where the medium of instruction is Ukrainian. Here we provide the mentioned two articles in the original:

„Article 10. The state language of Ukraine is the Ukrainian language. The State ensures the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the entire territory of Ukraine. In Ukraine, the free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, is guaranteed. The State promotes the learning of languages of international communication. The use of languages in Ukraine is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine and is determined by law.

Article 11. The State promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, of its historical consciousness, traditions and culture, and also the development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.”²⁴

In another interview Vakarchuk construed the Constitution in such a way that the arrangement of the external independent assessment (which serve as entrance examinations) in minority languages is anti-constitutional.²⁵

Besides that it is quite difficult to arrive to the same interpretation of these articles as Vakarchuk did, it is worth to citing Article 53 of the Constitution:

“Citizens who belong to national minorities are guaranteed in accordance with the law the right to receive instruction in their native language, or to study their native language in state and communal educational establishments and through national cultural societies.”

However, we can hardly find any reference in the Constitution to majority members of the state being entitled the same rights. Thoughts of Miklós Kontra and Sándor Szilágyi N. concerning the Romanian educational rights perfectly suit

22 See the Minister’s interview in the newspaper *Vysokyj zamok* (October 23, 2008) or on the website: http://www.mon.gov.ua/main.php?querz=newstmp/2008/23_10/1. In addition see the release of the Ministry’s press department: http://www.mon.gov.ua/main.php?query=newstmp/2008/11_09.

23 For the interview see the following website: <http://www.ut.net.ua/art/166/0/2804/>

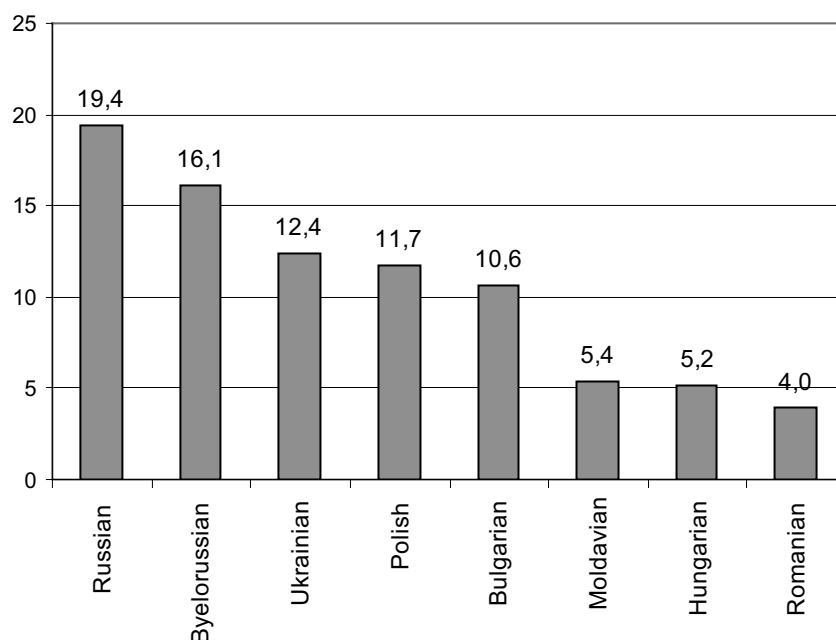
24 For the English version of the Constitution see the official web site of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine: <http://www.rada.gov.ua/const/conengl.htm>

25 See the Minister’s interview given to *Радіо Свобода* (Radio of Freedom) on July 29, 2009

the Ukrainian practice: “Among the general provisions, if language comes up, it is always specified as Romanian, never as mother tongue. After the general provisions some “special provisions” touch upon minorities, which mention actions that minorities can do in their mother tongue. It is important to notice that in the Romanian Laws the word mother tongue is mentioned only in relation to minorities. In that way the use of the mother tongue appears in the law as a privilege or as an extra burden. The use of the mother tongue seems to be a privilege because on account of the education in the mother tongue, separate actions and special paragraphs are needed in the law, which existence grants education in the mother tongue. If in the law something gets a separate paragraph, it is surely a privilege, which the speakers of the majority language (the official language) do not have (Kontra-Szilágyi 2002: 5, my translation). In this context, a minority’s efforts and needs concerning education in the mother tongue appear almost as ambitions which endanger the rights of the majority, moreover which imperil the constitutional order.

Presumably, the Ukrainian education policy would like to take a vengeance on the Russification policy of the Soviet Union by embarrassing minorities from higher education, because in the past Russians enjoyed a privilege position in this area.

Figure 4. The ratio of having higher educational degree among the main nationalities of Ukraine based on 2001 national census



Source: <http://www.uncpd.kiev.ua/ucipr/ukr/stat/census/01.php>

The central education policy, of course, appears also on the level of regions. If we have a look at the case of Transcarpathia, one of Ukraine's 27 administrative units in the very west part of the country, we can see an ethnically and linguistically colourful territory. The region borders on four member states of the European Union, namely Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

MAP 1. Ethnic diversity in Transcarpathia region

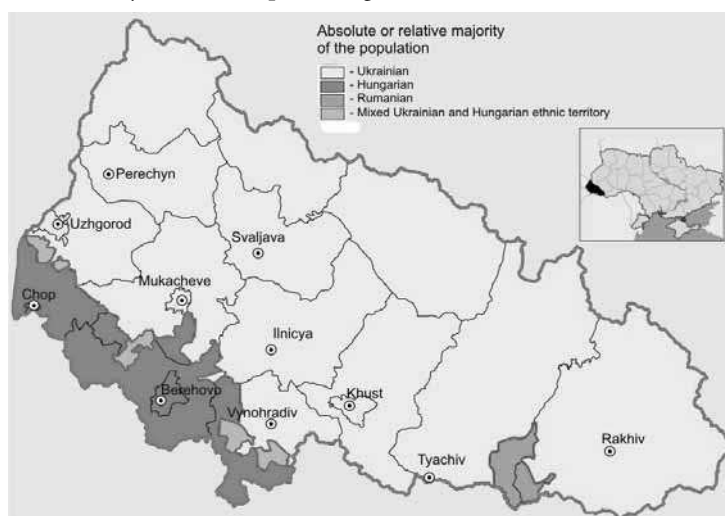


TABLE 5. Linguistic and Ethnic content of Transcarpathia according to 2001 national census

	Their ration within the territory of the region	
	Nationality	Native language
Ukrainians	80,5	81,0
Hungarians	12,1	12,7
Romanians	2,6	2,6
Russians	2,5	2,9
Romas	1,1	0,2
Others	1,2	0,6
Total number	100	100

In Transcarpathia besides schools with Ukrainian as a language of instruction children have the opportunity to learn in Hungarian, Russian Romanian and Slovak. Since Ukraine has gained its independence (1991) the ratio of pupils studying in Ukrainian was increased. At the same time the number of Russian medium schools and the number of pupils studying there was decreased. As the effect of the country's language policy the ratio of pupils studying in Ukrainian within ten years (from 1989/90 to 2008/2009) increased from 81,12% to 86,48%. In terms of Transcarpathia 8,1% of secondary school pupils studied in Russian in the academic

year 1989/1990, while today the ratio is under 1%. In the academic year 1992/1993 parallel Slovak medium education was organized in one Ukrainian school of Uzhgorod, since this language is also presented among the languages of instruction in Transcarpathian schools.

TABLE 6. The distribution of Transcarpathian schools according to the language of instruction

Language of instruction	Number of schools in the given academic year			
	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Ukrainian	574	573	576	575
Russian	3	2	3	2
Hungarian	70	71	70	66
Romanian	12	12	12	12
Ukrainian and Russian	6	6	4	4
Ukrainian and Hungarian	29	27	28	31
Ukrainian and Slovak	1	1	1	1
Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian	2	2	2	2
Total number	697	694	696	693

Figure 5. The distribution of pupils in schools of Transcarpathia according to the language of instruction (between academic year 1989–1990 and 2008–2009)

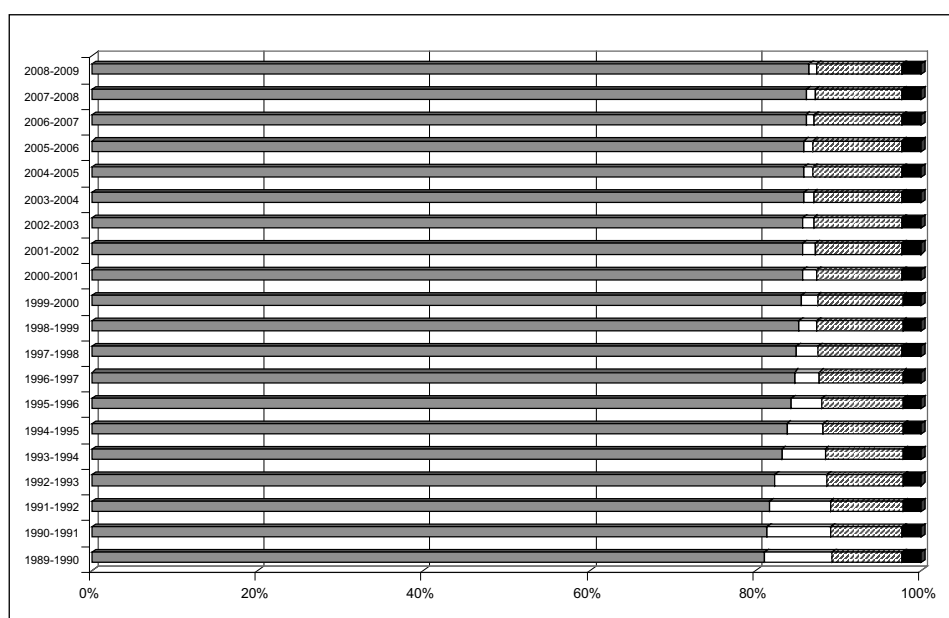


TABLE 7. The ethnic distribution of the population of Transcarpathia (in 1989 and 2001) and the distribution of pupils according to the language of instruction (in the academic year 1989/1990, 2000/2001 and 2008/2009)

(based on Orosz 2007, and data from the Transcarpathian Regional Educational and Scientific High Committee)

	Their ratio within the total population (%)		The number and ratio of pupils learning in the given language					
			1989/1990.		2000/2001.		2008/2009.	
	1989	2001	Number of pupils	%	Number of pupils	%	Number of pupils	%
Ukrainian	78,41	80,51	166245	81,12	174700	85,76	138333	86,48
Russian	3,97	2,47	16598	8,10	3400	1,67	1548	0,97
Hungarian	12,50	12,08	17275	8,43	20900	10,26	16407	10,26
Romanian	2,36	2,56	4827	2,36	4600	2,26	3598	2,25
Slovak	0,58	0,45	0	0,00	102	0,05	79	0,05

In the case of Transcarpathia also Russians have the highest ratio among people having higher educational degree.

TABLE 8. The level of education among the main nationalities of Transcarpathia based on 2001 national census

	UKRAIN- IANS	HUNGAR- IANS	ROMANI- ANS	RUSSIANS	ROMAS
Tertiary education	8,7	5,1	2,1	28,1	0,03
Vocational training	13,1	9,8	2,7	23,9	0,2
Secondary school education	40,0	43,6	19,6	33,0	4,0
Primary school education	19,4	27,7	49,4	8,7	17,1
Elementary school education	16,5	16,4	21,3	5,7	49,3

Minority languages are also present in the higher education of Transcarpathia. The Uzhgorod National University gives education of Russian, Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian philologist. In 2008 the Hungarian department of the University was opened with four degree programmes (Hungarian language and literature, Physics, Mathematics and History) where the medium of instruction is partly Hungarian. In 1996 the Transcarpathian Hungarian College was established in the city of Berehovo. In the College, which was founded by the local societal organisations, the main language of instruction is also Hungarian. Here young people have the opportunity to get education in ten different degree programmes. Besides the

above mentioned two institutes Hungarian is used in some degree programs of the Kijiv Slavistik University and the Mukachevo State University.

Nevertheless, current issues in the Ukrainian education policy can lead to the disappearance of minority higher education. As a direct consequence of the Ukranification policy more and more parents chose Ukrainian schools for their children. The introduction of obligatory exam in Ukrainian language and literature give an unequal starting position for non-native Ukrainians. Further on the fact that in order to apply for minority language degree programmes besides taking the Ukrainian language exam school-leavers should pass even an exam in foreign languages (English, German, French or Spanish) or in the history of Ukraine. It means that the Ukrainian language exam is obligatory for applicants of Russian, Hungarian, Romanian or Slovak degree programmes, but they have no rights (and they are not obliged) to take an exam in their native language (which is actually their chosen speciality).

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the developments in education, language and minority policy in the recent past, it seems clear that the Ukrainian elite, which in 1991 became a national majority from a Soviet minority, continues the inherited Leninist policies and methods towards national minorities.

The essence of this kind of policy is to ensure broad rights for the minorities. Meanwhile it is suggested to them that minorities can be successful if they choose schools with Ukrainian as the medium of instruction, and if eventually they shift from their own language to Ukrainian. Namely, the state regards assimilation as the way of minority integration.

In this system the role of the minorities is that they can wear their national costumes at folklore festivals, they can sing their own songs, dance their traditional dances, perhaps attend their own churches and cook their national meals. But as soon as they enter a state office, their workplace or their schools, they should (possibly spontaneously) switch to Ukrainian.

Thus, Ukraine, instead of fostering the present-day ethnic and linguistic diversity, pursues the state model that is colourful from the ethnic point of view but homogeneous linguistically (in particular Ukrainian monolingual). In the process of building the monolingual nation-state one of the most important means is education.

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